



## Can Fire Drown? by JustClem

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**Summary:** Fine! So what if Max hates Mike? How can she not with the way he treats El! Sure, he's nice, yeah, but El deserves more than him! She deserves someone who treats her nicely, brings out the best in her, and complements her! Or, at the very fucking least, someone who doesn't treat her like garbage! (It's not like she's jealous of him or anything.)

## Can Fire Drown?

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{Originally published in July 14th, 2019}

*JustClem*

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It's a feeling that flickers to life, like fire. It worms into each of her organs and influences her mind, bit by bit, before she even realises it.

Max can't pinpoint when exactly the flicker happens.

She can, however, pinpoint when she notices its influence.

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McDonalds isn't the ideal place for a double date, but in a desert like Hawkins, you don't have a second choice.

As they make their way there, Mike and Lucas laugh and cackle and make fart jokes. Meanwhile, Max tries to drown out her annoyance.

The boys are next to each other, and the *women* - AKA her and El - are next to the boys. It's the ideal arrangement, yet Max, for some reason, hates it. (She hates a lot of things for a lot of reasons, yet the hate for this is bigger than necessary. She can't find the reason on why.)

"Hey, hey, Mike?" Lucas sneers into his shoulder, and Mike, with his big, toothy smile, looks at him.

"What, dude? What?"

"Why does British people love drinking tea?"

Mike shifts so he faces Lucas. In doing so, he lets go of El's hand. El looks at his hand, no longer attached to hers, and looks up at Mike,

who doesn't even notice. There's this glint in her eyes that disappears before it fades in.

El glues her eyes down to the shiny tiles of the mall's floor, and it leaves Max to wonder if there's something wrong with her eyes.

"Why? Why?"

Lucas looks like he's about to tell Mike that Russians have infiltrated this town. "Because they want to be royaltea~"

The boys' laugh are so loud. Max cringes at the volume. Everyone around them give them annoyed glares. Max hopes her smile of apology is enough to dispel the effects of these boys.

Max looks at El again. She doesn't look too happy. She's not upset, either. Max has never seen her upset - not when it comes to trivial things. They're opposites like that, she supposes. Max is always upset, and El is almost never.

Mike and Lucas continue to spit each other their hilarious jokes.

With each cheesy punchline and overdramatic reactions to them, El shrinks more and more.

Max glances at Mike, who looks like he's having the most fun in the world, not paying attention to his own girlfriend.

*Alright. I can't take this anymore.*

"Guys! Would you quit it with the horrible jokes, already!" They cower under her smite of a glare, as they should. She leans forward so she can look at El better. "If you two are gonna keep on yapping, then me and El are gonna go and do our own thing!"

There's the expected silence, and the cliché boy-laugh, to which she rolls her eyes to. Ugh. Sometimes she wishes they would grow *up* already.

But she catches El's eyes, filled with a different kind of glint. And El smiles that small, shy smile of hers.

And Max isn't all that upset about the boys teasing her for being such a Debbie Downer.

They tell she and El to sit down and enjoy themselves while they order the disgusting, infamous, greasy American-style food. It makes her think that they aren't all that bad.

Max glances at their retreating form with no real interest. Her eyebrows slant down when their laughter boom across the fastfood place.

*Or they wanna have some boy time.* She doesn't actually shiver, but she feels like she is. The disgust recoils her. *Why do they even suggest this double-date thing in the first place if they're gonna ditch us like this?*

El shifts in her seat. That draws Max's attention away from them, and on to something far more pleasant.

She smiles at El and gives a huff. "Boys, amirite?"

El blinks, and tilts her head to the side. Max focuses on the way her short, curly hair bounces around at the motion more than she'd like to admit. "Yes?"

Max sputters and stumbles over her words like the idiot she is. Of course, how can she forget? El doesn't exactly grow up in your typical American evergreen suburbs. *How can I be so insensitive?*

She chuckles an easygoing chuckle - the kind she sees Lucas and Dustin wear. (An effort to make herself look more approachable.) "You know, like, how loud they are and all those fart jokes." She makes a "tsk" sound. "Total boy things. And it's kinda gross."

El doesn't seem to get it - judging by the way her eyebrows tilt down - but she smiles nonetheless. "Oh."

"I mean, you can't tell me you like even half of Mike's jokes." Max places her elbows to the table. Her hands, linked together, rest under her chin. "Or do you?" She leans forward, into El's personal space, and dares her to say otherwise.

El doesn't seem to mind her intrusion on her space. She looks to the

side in contemplation. "I guess some of them aren't that great."

"Some?"

El's face of contemplation deepens. She looks at Max, and Max wants to coo at how apologetic she looks. "Maybe Mike isn't as funny as he thinks he is."

Max throws her arm out. "Right?! He's a total dickhead!" Max leans back into her seat. She notices the way El glances at her, offended, and snorts. "Oh, c'mon, he is! Just because he saved you a couple of times doesn't mean he's great in general!" She blinks, and realizes how that comes out more venomous than she likes. She tries to alleviate her own intensity. "But, yeah, he's nice. Whatever."

She shrugs and crosses her arms. Her eyes dart pointedly away from El. Partly because of her embarrassment, and partly because of genuine confusion.

What was that all about? She sounded like she downright hated Mike, which is far from the truth. Mike is a cool guy! Sure, he's a total dweeb and a nerd but he did save El and his attraction towards her is genuine. He's better than most weirdos around Hawkins, that's for sure.

More and more unanswered question clouds Max's head. They become nothing more than a buzz at the back of her head when the boys arrive. Mike, with their food, and Lucas, their drinks.

Oh, and lets not forget about the stupid jokes. Can't have boys without stupid jokes, after all.

"Hey, El, I was thinking- since next week's our one month anniversary, why don't we go someplace and do something fun? Just the two of us."

Something hot ignites in Max. Kind of like fire, only it doesn't burn her. It does something else to her. Something weirder. Something fire shouldn't do.

And that something intensifies when El looks at her. It's a small glance. Happens for less than a second. Who knows? Maybe she

imagines it. (Ah, who is she kidding? She so doesn't.)

"That sounds nice."

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Max doesn't know why she's doing this, only that she's excited to do this, and she hopes no one will make a big deal out of this.

Hopper opens the door on her tenth knock. He raises an eyebrow down on her, and Max braces herself for any rude comment he might make.

Instead, he says, "The idiots ain't here."

It's a pleasant surprise.

"I know. They're playing their boys' only D&D campaign." Max pulls a face at that. Even Hopper grumbles. He stays there and looks at her, and it takes Max an embarrassing three seconds to realise why he's looking at her like that. "I'm here to see Eleven."

His eyebrows shoot up. His face kind of leans back and turns his double chin into a triple chin, but he looks at her up and down in a total Dad fashion(tm).

Max tries not to look out of place as he nods to himself and steps aside.

Max looks around and appreciates the wicked cabin. It's a surprise how clean this place is. Especially with how creepy and borderline haunting it looks on the outside.

She knocks on which she guesses must be El's door. There's a soft "come in" from the otherside, and a heartbeat where Max thinks this isn't a good idea at all, and she should skidaddle the fuck out of here. She braces through that feeling because she's no coward. (And also because it'll be awkward for her to change her mind when she's already in too deep.)

Max opens the door.

El is there (of course she's there! This is her room, dumbass!) and

she's as graceful and timid as ever. She props her back to the wall as she sits on her bed and puts her pillow between the wall and her body. Max notices how rigid her posture is, how straight her spine is. It's like the kind of postures old British teachers expect out of you.

One of the many hints that El isn't any random girl.

El looks up at her. Confusion fills her face. "Umm... hi?"

Max tries not to be awkward (and fails) by waving her hand. "Heya, El! It's me!"

"Yes."

"And, I'm here to, uh..."

"Is everything okay?" She sits up straighter; a feat Max previously thought was impossible.

"Well, yeah, but-"

"Are the demogorgons back? Are Mike and the others fine?"

Max tries not to grit her teeth too hard (and fails in that, as well.) "Yes, Mike is fine." She leans into the doorframe, flicks her hair, and tucks her arms into the comforts of her hoodie. "Thought it'd be a good idea for us girls to hang out, ya know."

Max gulps and wonders why she's so nervous about this. It's only El, but Max feels otherwise when El smiles up at her with that 'El-esque' smile of hers. "It is."

Something weirdly familiar and hot ignites inside of her. Kind of like back at the McDonald's place, but more prominent, this time.

El drags her in and asks about what they should do. (She recoils when Max suggests they watch something scary, much to her amusement.)

As they have their 'girl time', Max becomes aware of how this flame-like *thing* inside of her roars. And also that they're alone. In a locked room. Alone. Together.



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It's not the biggest surprise when Billy barges into her room and steals her not-so-secret stash of M&Ms.

It is when he sits on the edge of her bed and makes the mattress - and her, along with it - bounce. "What's got you in a loop?"

Max continues to stare at the ceiling. She clutches the walkie-talkie in her hands a little bit tighter before she lets it go and closes her eyes. "Lucas and I broke up."

She can feel his gaze on her. "And you're sulking... why, exactly?"

She grunts. "I am *not* sulking."

"Answer the question."

So, yeah. That's Billy, right there. A total psycho of a brother, but a brother nonetheless.

It almost scares her that he's the only one she can talk to about this stuff without being teased for it. Well, there's El, but for some reason, Max feels hesitant talking to her about it.

(She's not fully-aware of it yet, but deep in her subconscious, she knows El is the sole reason she broke things off with Lucas. She will, though. It's only a matter of time.)

Billy's an asshole, but he's an asshole who will rip any other asshole to shreds if said asshole so much as boops her in the freaking nose.

Max groans and buries her eyes with one arm. It drapes across her face and tickles her cheeks.

"I don't know."

That's a lie.

"Bullshit."

And Billy knows it too.

She pushes the insides of her cheek with her tongue, and moves her jaw around like it'll help.

"Because I'm not sad."

The answer is immediate. And it sounds satisfied rather than comforting. "Good fucking riddance, then. That kid doesn't deserve you. Never has."

"And why is that?"

"'Cuz he's a nerd. And nerds are weirdos. And you shouldn't hang out with weirdos."

Max sighs a huge sigh and throws her arm away. She props herself up on her elbow and suppresses her grin. "Thank God."

He looks like a confused child, especially with the half-opened M&M on his hands. The image is almost ruined by the tendrils of smoke that still comes out of his mouth. "Huh?"

"I thought you were gonna say it's because he's black, which is, ya know," Max winces, "kind of racist."

Billy looks at her. His mouth twitches, once, and that's how Max knows he's kidding when he says, "Yeah, that too."

She throws a pillow at him, anyway. "Asshole."

He takes the hit with grace. And by that she means a shrug and a middle finger. He struggles with the M&M wrapper. Max holds out her hand, palm up. He gives it to her, no questions asked. She opens it, tosses three of 'em into her mouth, and gives the wrapper back at him.

"Plus, it's not like you were into him. You were never into boys." It's spoken so casually and intimately that Max nods to it before she understands what he implies.

He leaves Max - M&M in tow - with confusion, fear, and a mega-huge revelation.

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Max and El hangs out a lot. Like, *a-lot* a-lot. Capital 'A'.

And Max wishes she can slow down the pace, but can't, for some reason.

Because Max isn't the only one who loves their hang-outs.

El loves them as much too. And it's evident with the way she shows up one day at her house, unannounced, with a plastic bag and a dopey grin on her face.

"El!?"

El holds up her bag and hides her mouth with it. "I brought snacks."

Turns out El doesn't understand the definition of snacks, because 'snacks' ends up being Eggos. They're made by the infamous Chief of Police himself, according to El.

Turns out Hawkin's star police is good at making Eggos. Like, insanely good.

And Max teaches El how to play chess.

(And El learns that the best way to win chess is by using her ridiculous mind powers. Not to mention her even more ridiculous pout powers that propels Max from calling her out on it.)

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Max isn't big on physical contact. But she doesn't mind it all that much when El starts doing the 'physical contact' shit.

It's kind of nice, actually.

Plus, it's, like, normal for girls to do the mushy stuff. Max sees it all the time in movies and TV shows and high school sitcoms!

It's what she keeps telling herself, anyways, as El wraps an arm around her own, and sort of leans into her.

The boys walks around the park in a campaign mission to retrieve the magic orbs, or something. (Will made up the game, and no one can

deny him from having a blast, because he's Will and everyone loves the soft little guy.)

The girls, however, opts to sit on the bench and enjoy the scenery.

Max doesn't care. She's pretty sure El doesn't either, but it's not about the game. It's about being with friends n' stuff. Maybe. Probably. Yeah, she has no idea. But it *is* fun to watch Dustin and Will hit things off with their nerdy stuff.

El's hair has grown down to her shoulders now. Crazy to think it's been one whole year since she moved here. One year since all that craziness with the Demogorgon dogs and government cover-ups.

One year since El.

"How do you do it?"

Max hums languidly.

El shifts and tightens her grip. It takes Max some (okay, a lot) of courage, but she rests her other arm on El's thigh and wills herself not to blush too deeply.

*Normal*, she keeps telling herself. *This is normal*.

El says something, and *whoa*, is it her, or is El's voice kind of... low and rough in a weird way? And her breath is warm too. It tickles her bare arm - hot air ghosting over her skin.

Max wants to shiver.

It surprises Max that she manages not to, even if barely.

"Sorry, what did you say?"

"Skateboarding," El says, her tone light in curious and short circuiting Max's mind. "It looks nice, whenever I see you doing it. You look like you're having fun."

"Yeah?" Max tries at keeping her cool and not thinking about the fact that El watches her goof off with her board. (She fails, to nobody's

surprise.) "I can teach you, sometimes."

The suggestion flies out of her mouth without her permission. And it scares her; the infinite amount of answer El can give.

"That would be nice." El sighs into her shoulder, and her consciousness slips away. "I love hanging out with you, Max. You're... pretty."

El sleeps and uses Max as a pillow in this lazy evening.

Max ponders about how much El understands about everything. Their world. The kind of society they live in. What certain words combined together means.

And how certain words, when spoken to another person, might result in that other person struggling to breathe.

Things like 'you're pretty'.

And 'I love hanging out with you'.

And 'You're the superest', which El said two days ago.

And 'You're the opposite of a mouth breather' - also two days ago.

Max looks down on El. She tucks a strand of curly hair that sways on El's face into her ear, and curses herself because of how creepy it looks.

She can't help herself. Not with El. And El is too innocent to know what her actions does to Max. *She shouldn't have to know! Her actions shouldn't do this to you in the first place! God, get a grip on yourself! You're slipping!*

Glances. Touches to the tips of the fingers. Looks. Hugs. Touches to the shoulder. Smiles. Special smiles. Touches. Smiles reserved for each other and only each other. And more and more touches. Neverending touches.

The fire-but-not-fire inside of her is always present nowadays. Always on-standby, 24/7. It pulls its heat to the max when El is there, and-

no, pun *not* intended. And on some days-

"Heya, El!"

-such as today, the fire turns ugly.

This happens not because Mike is present. It happens because Mike is present and *presenting* himself to El.

El stirs from her slumber. Of course she does. Mike's not considerate enough to lower his voice because El was *sleeping*, for *Christ's sake*.

Mike stops and looks at El, who nuzzles deeper into Max's chest. Mike's eyes hover to give Max a questioning stare. Max returns it with a shrug, because, well, what is there to say?

Mike stands and stares for a while longer. And Max finds herself involuntarily thrown into a stare-off with the Wheeler boy. Or something like that, of some kind. One she, with reluctance, returns.

It doesn't hit her, why he gives her this stare. It's not quite a glare or a squint, but something in-between. His jaw moves and his lips open like he wants to say something, but she doubts even he himself knows what he wants to say.

El squints up at him. Max tries (and succeeds, for once) to refrain herself from wiping out a small hint of drool on the side of her lip.

"Mike."

Mike blinks and jogs up to her. El doesn't move from her spot. Max doesn't want to do it too. It's nice to be this close to El.

"Hey, El. I was thinking we should go on a date tonight. Before curfew, of course. My place." He actually *waggles* his eyebrows. The idiot. "We can build pillow forts in my basement. Like old times."

Max is too busy staring at Mike and trying to squash down a feeling she will never, ever admit is jealousy. So much so that she doesn't notice El slipping a hand into her own. Nor does she notice gripping said hand, almost like second nature.

"I... No, Mike. Not tonight."

Max isn't thick enough not to notice that El doesn't mean *just* tonight. Mike is. "How about tomorrow, then?" El looks down and purses her lips. Max wants to sympathise with Mike on how he's rejected by his own girlfriend, but can't. "Oh, c'mon! We never hang out nowadays!"

"Sorry," El whispers.

Max wants to tell El not to be sorry. That Mike brings this upon himself. And that this is not at all her fault.

But she knows she shouldn't.

Because that would mean interfering with a lovers quarrel. Or however that saying goes. If that saying even exists. Which she doubts it does.

"I- I mean-" Mike shifts his weight. One foot to the other. He looks lost. Confused. "Are you on your period or something?"

Oof. Bad move.

El jolts and looks up to him. She fumes with anger and embarrassment. Mike throws his hands up. At least he's not dumb enough not to notice he's said the wrong words. "Sorry, sorry, it was a joke."

Double oof.

El says no words. She stands up, spares him no glance, and leaves.

Not without tugging Max alongside her.

So Max follows, like a lost puppy. Unlike El, she gives Mike a glance.

That's when it hits her, what his stare means.

What he means.

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Max stares at the ceiling. At least it's not her ceiling, this time. It's

El's, which has become as familiar to her as her own.

She's engulfed in it.

This feeling that's haunted her since that day at the McDonalds.

This feeling that's haunted her since longer than that. (And the McDonalds thing was a way for it to finally announce her that, "hey! You're haunted, dingus!")

This feeling. She doesn't know what to make of it. It's hot. Sometimes unbearably so. But it doesn't spark. Nor ignite. Not like a fire would. It's more like jello or maple syrup, with the way it fills her insides and slows it all down, along with her, and the beating of her heart.

She's never talked about it. Not really. Not with Billy, nor with the gang. Not with anyone. Not until now.

"Can fire drown?"

It's a whisper that fleets away before it emerges.

It's a whisper that would've emerged if not for the walkie-talkie that flickers to life.

It produces a string of high-pitched noises, before a familiar voice pitches in.

*"Heya, El. Can't hang out with you tomorrow. Will brought a new board game! It's tots wicked! We're gonna have so much fun! Bye!"*

And that's it.

No "I'm sorry"s. No "I hope you don't mind"s. No nothing.

Only excitement at a new board game. So much so that he cancels a long-awaited dinner with his girlfriend for it.

That's it.

That's everything.

Max gapes and looks at the walkie-talkie. As if it would turn on again



and have Mike say that it was a joke. As if they were going to go all along. It was their anniversary, for Christ's sake! Of course he wouldn't cancel!

But no.

Mike cancelled on their plan. The plan El's excited about. The plan that has excited her for weeks. The plan Mike *must* know El's excited about.

God.

This is the epitome of- just-

"Oh! Fuck this guy!" Max slams the walkie-talkie off. She considers slamming the walkie-talkie period, but fumes as she holds herself back. Hopper wouldn't appreciate her making a ruckus in his house. With how paranoid he can be at times, he'd barge into their room, all gung-ho style.

Max settles for throwing the walkie-talkie into one of El's dressers. It'll do, for now. Tomorrow they can burn the actual thing. Whatever.

She turns to El, whose eyes glue themselves to where the walkie talkie was.

"That's it! I've had it with him! You're done with him! You're breaking up, full-stop!"

El is silent. But she's almost always silent. That's who she is. She's the opposite of Max, that way. That's cool. Completely cool. Max is there to do all the talking for her.

"Ugh! He's so-! I mean, it's not like he's *nine* or something! This is the third time he's cancelled plans! It's like he doesn't even care anymore!"

But while El is silent, she's never without words. She's not speechless. Not until now.

So Max, never one to hold her tongue, holds her tongue.

"El?"

That's when she notices how glassy her eyes are. Her eyes, always full of wonder, of a kind of timid brightness, now ... hurt. Not even resentful. Just *hurt*.

El doesn't hate. She doesn't do it, doesn't want to do it, doesn't understand it. Sure, she does amazing, bloody stuff with her powers. But those are her *powers*, not her. And she always, *always* does it out of survival instincts.

If there's one thing El hates, it's violence. And anger. And anything negative, in general. She dislikes horror movies. She resents war stories. She downright seethes at the fact that her dad's job does the opposite of guarantee his safety.

El doesn't hate.

She cries, instead.

And she does so in the quietest, most gracious and vulnerable way. It breaks Max's heart in too many ways for too many times.

And Max, never known to be gentle, gently places a hand on El's shoulders and whispers a soft "hey" and hopes that it helps. El sobs harder at her touch. Max tries to recoil, but El launches herself at Max, and Max thinks that maybe her touch does help. Maybe *she* helps.

Max tries with "It's going to be okay".

She tries with "He's so going to regret doing this to you".

None of them works. And Max thinks that nothing will work when she says, "I'm here."

The effect is immediate.

El sobs harder, and she clutches Max tighter, but she bobs her head up and down, as though she's nodding.

Max isn't used to this comfort thing. When she cries, Billy would

whack her in the head and tell her to grow a pair. But this is El. So Max tries to comfort her in all the ways she can think of. She runs her fingers through those brown, puffy curly locks of hair. She shushes El. She even rocks her like a baby.

El's heave of sobs turns into sniffles. "Sorry."

And Max wants to chew her out for saying that. "Don't be."

They stay that way for ten to fifteen minutes. If it were any other girl, Max would've laughed at how ridiculous she acted, all because of a cancelled plan.

But this isn't any girl. And Max knows full-well what Mike means to El.

El thinks the world of him. He's her hero, her idol, her everything.

Which makes it even more frustrating that he drifts away from her, as time passes.

Because this isn't shady government conspiracies or funky demogorgons. Those, they can fight and antagonise. Those, they know not to spare mercy. This is not those. This is Mike. A friend. A lover. And a possible ex.

"He hates me."

And Max has to wonder when her heart will stop breaking and when El will stop breaking it over and over already.

"He doesn't, El." Max repeats her words, like it'll make it more solid.

"Then why?"

El isn't a talker. She never is. But she doesn't need to say anything. Because Max understands. Because Max has always understood, more than she lets on.

"Sometimes people ... stop wanting to date each other. It doesn't mean they stop loving each other. It's called growing up, and growing apart. Happens all the time."

It happened to her and Lucas. And her and her other friends, back before Hawkins.

El whimpers and shifts so she faces away from Max in bed.

"Hey, hey. What's the matter?"

Max's hand hovers over El's thin, delicate frame. El is porcelain; vitrified. She's glass. And Max fears of breaking her with her uncoordinated, clumsy, toxic touch.

But she can't let El bear this pain alone, so she touches El with her touch, and she coaxes El to look at her.

"Talk to me, El."

El looks so distraught, so confused, but Max believes she'll pull through. El is strong. Stronger in ways other than mind strength. Strong in ways few believed in.

There's something in El Max hasn't seen before. No, wait. That's not true. She has seen it, only in glimpses. Short glimpses. So short that Max has written it off as only in her head.

But it isn't.

And now this something is here, and it's prominent, and it shines.

"What if he doesn't love me?"

"That's ridiculous. Mike loves you." Her words are a complete contrast to the lack of lighthearted tone she adopts. It's a contrast to her.

"You don't know that."

Max's hand ghosts over El's waist. Each finger takes its time to memorise each little wrinkle and bump of the fabric. She exhales on what lies underneath it.

"I do."

"How?"

Max gulps. "Trust me, okay?"

Because it's simple, really. No matter how airheaded the boy can be, Max knows Mike isn't 100% stupid. He at least has one functioning brain cell that's able to accept and admire the enigma that is El.

She's seen the way Mike used to look at El. Back in the early days. Back before Max questions the probability of a drowning fire.

That look lingers in him, even now. Sure, it's muted, and it's overshadowed by many fresher feelings, but it's still *there*, somewhere in him.

"If ... I don't have Mike anymore, then ..."

There's a small part of Max that knows what's about to happen before anything happens. It's the same part that knew, from that strange day at McDonalds, that Max was smitten over El. And she would fall in love with her.

El looks at her with her breath heavy and hot, and her cheeks flushed, and maybe, just maybe, Max thinks, she knows what's about to happen, too.

"You have me."

The fire drowns her.

Max growls and grumbles. El mewls and moans.

Fingers tangle into locks of hair. Hands that pull. Dissatisfaction. They're not close enough even when they're pressed against each other.

The drowning fire accompanies them throughout it all, and blurs away. It never lets go of them even as they let go of each other.

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**The End**

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Author's Note:

First of all, weird formatting, I know, but I'm trying to "try something new for a change", or something.

Secondly, I can confidently say that this is, in my opinion, one of the best fan fictions I've ever written, in terms of the description and the change that the characters go through and how it affects their relationship. This, and my Amberprice work *She Deserves Better (Than You)* which I've yet posted here are the two stories I still read from time to time as a way to sort of remind myself that I'm a good writer, and those are all the proof I need.

I hope you enjoyed reading my work. Have a good day!